



SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

“ONE GENERATION SHALL PRAISE THY WORKS TO ANOTHER, AND SHALL DECLARE THY MIGHTY ACTS. I WILL SPEAK OF THE GLORIOUS HONOUR OF THY MAJESTY, AND OF THY WONDROUS WORKS,” PSALM 145:4, 5.

ELLEN WHITE WRITES, “THE PAST HISTORY OF THE CAUSE OF GOD NEEDS TO BE BROUGHT BEFORE OUR PEOPLE, YOUNG AND OLD, THAT THEY MAY BE FAMILIAR WITH IT. HOW FREQUENTLY WERE THE WAYMARKS SET UP BY THE LORD IN HIS DEALING WITH ANCIENT ISRAEL, LEST THEY SHOULD FORGET THE HISTORY OF THE PAST,” LETTER 33, 1890.

1885

In 1885, Charles F. Curtis and George A. King, the first Seventh-day Adventists, came as colporteurs selling Daniel and the Revelation, by Uriah Smith. This was the beginning of the work in Atlanta, Georgia. Around 1892, the first church building was erected on Fair Street, now Memorial Drive, near the corner of Cherokee Avenue..

1903 - 1907

The Atlanta-Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church, organized in 1903, was located on Ashby Street. It is believed to be the first Seventh-day Adventist church organized in Atlanta.

1906

A mission school was started by the Atlanta-Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church. That school is now the Berean Christian Junior Academy, 401 Hamilton E. Holmes Drive N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30318.

1907

The Ephesus Jr. Academy was established. This school, located in Jacksonville, Florida, is

one of the oldest schools in the South Atlantic Conference, and the oldest school in the Southeastern Conference.

1909

When W. C. White visited Atlanta in 1909, he found a mission school of two rooms and homemade desks. Having to necessitate strict economy, they kept their trunks and beds in parts of the schoolrooms. A new location was purchased about this time. The new building, 34 x 48 ft., faced Greensferry Avenue. It was in the neighborhood of Spellman, Morehouse, and Atlanta University. The front of this building was used as a church auditorium, and the back, for school purposes. Behind the main building, another two-story building was erected for schoolrooms and parsonage.

1910

Black membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church was 1,000.

1929

James Edson White died in 1929. Some said he was an eccentric, a dreamer, hard to get along with, and a generator of too many projects; but, he was also a chosen vessel of God who pioneered gospel ministry among, then, a despised and neglected minority.

1945 - THE BEGINNING

On December 4, 1945, at 10:00 a.m., the General Conference, Southern Union Conference, and three state conferences (Carolina, Florida, and Georgia-Cumberland) met at the Berean Church on Ashby Street to organize a Black conference. The Southern Union president, A. F. Hackman, presided over 395 delegates and 19 delegates-at-large. The delegates came from



SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

the Colored (Black) departments of the Carolina, Florida, and Georgia-Cumberland Conferences.

It was voted the name of the new conference would be the South Atlantic Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The conference territory from north to south stretches over 1,000 miles, and from east to west, nearly 300 miles.

1946 - 1954

1946

The first conference office was in the home of publishing secretary Richard P. Robinson, 150 Rosser St., Atlanta, Georgia.

1947

The conference rented office space in the Odd Fellows Building on Auburn Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia. H.D. Singleton, conference president, led in the purchase of the first conference office on Simpson Street, Atlanta.

1947

H. D. Singleton led in the purchase of 40 acres of land in Hawthorne, Florida, to build the first conference campground. In the same year, another 20 acres was purchased across the highway for additional growth. Elder Singleton hired many pastors to foster the growth of the conference.

1952

It was voted, Dr. Carl Dent serve as medical secretary for the South Atlantic Conference.

1952

It was voted, F. H. Jenkins serve as secretary for rural living.

1954

H. D. Singleton left South Atlantic Conference to

become president of Northeastern Conference, and J. H. Wagner left the Allegheny Conference to become the second president of South Atlantic Conference.

1954

The Fifth Biennial Session of South Atlantic Conference was held July 5, 1954, in Hawthorne, Florida. J. H. Wagner was reelected president.

1957 - 1970

1957

Elder Wagner built a new conference office at 235 Chicamauga Avenue; the building was appraised at \$490,000.00. A short time later, a new school facility was built on West View Place. Mrs. Jesse Wagner was the principal of the school.

1962

In July 1962, Elder Wagner became ill and passed away at Riverside Hospital, Nashville, Tennessee. His funeral was August 15, 1962. A few months later, W. S. Banfield was elected president of South Atlantic Conference.

1962-1963

Tithe reached \$935,039.32. This was a great gain over the previous biennial period.

1964-1965

During this period tithe reached \$1,072,763.95.

Evangelism was the watchword for W. S. Banfield and his administration. In 1964, 714 were baptized, and in the middle of 1965, 1,141 were baptized. By the end of 1965, membership stood at 8,544.

Elder Banfield organized the first evangelistic team for the conference; Lloyd G. Rahming and D. M. Jones held meetings in Georgia and North



SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

Carolina, and hundreds became members of the “Remnant” church.

Between 1960 and 1970, over 200 of the rental cabins on the campground were constructed.

1967

Serving Overseas: On July 17, 1967, Elder & Mrs. Herman Vanderberg and their two children left the Charleston, South Carolina, district headed to Liberia, West Africa – Elder Vanderberg serving as pastor-evangelist.

1970

By 1970 the conference membership reached 10,876

1971 - 1982

1971

W. S. Banfield was elected associate secretary of the Southern Union, and R. L. Woodfork became president of the South Atlantic Conference.

Between 1970 and 1980, a total of 15,584 were baptized; this was an average of 1,558 per year.

The membership grew steadily between 1972 and 1975, under Elder Woodfork’s administration. Once again, evangelism was the watchword. In 1973, 1,647 were baptized; in 1974, 1,482 were baptized; and in 1975, 1,881 were baptized.

1975

South Atlantic Conference had the most baptisms out of all of the regional conferences, and had the second highest number of baptisms in North America. There was a total of 22 centuries, and a total of 18 pastors who baptized 50 or more per year during that triennium.

1975

A new pavilion was erected on the campground. There were three motel buildings, a store, a warehouse, a camp book center, a new kitchen, an enlarged cafeteria, and a trailer park.

1979 - 1982

1979

In May 1979, Elder Woodfork and his team broke ground for a new conference office that was completed in July 1980.

The South Atlantic Conference became the largest conference in membership in the Southern Union. A special constituency meeting was called on June 4, 1980, to consider dividing the conference. The delegates assembled and voted to divide South Atlantic Conference into two conferences beginning January 1, 1981. The lower conference territory became Southeastern Conference, and the upper conference territory remained South Atlantic Conference.

South Atlantic Conference continued to serve the entire district until January 1, 1981, on which day the district became two regions and began to function as two separate conferences.

1981

On January 1, 1981, the South Atlantic Conference had a new beginning! R. B. Hairston was elected as president to fill the unfinished term of R. L. Woodfork who was called to the General Conference. Elder Hairston not only finished the term of Elder Woodfork, he was reelected at the South Atlantic Conference Fourth Triennium, Sixteenth Conference Session, covering the 1979-1982 period. This made Elder Hairston the fifth president of the South Atlantic Conference which included only Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.



SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

Florida was no longer a part of the South Atlantic Conference after the new beginning.

As Elder Hairston was elected the fifth president of South Atlantic Conference, James Edgcombe was elected the first president of the new Southeastern Conference. Southeastern Conference is the former Florida portion of the South Atlantic Conference.

1981

June 4-13, 1981, marked the first 10-day joint Camp Meeting for the South Atlantic and Southeastern conferences. The Conference Development Offering on June 13, 1981, broke all records. A total of \$125,000 was reported (\$50,000 for Southeastern and \$75,000 for South Atlantic).

1982

Under the administration of R. B. Hairston, the conference purchased a 106-acre site for a campground in Orangeburg, South Carolina. A dining room/auditorium combination was the first building.

1983 - 1999

1981

The new beginning campground is located in Orangeburg, South Carolina. This city is in the middle of the South Atlantic Conference territory. From Blakely, Georgia, to Murfreesboro, North Carolina; from Greensboro, Georgia, to Franklinton, North Carolina; from Lagrange, Georgia, to Hickory, North Carolina; from Savannah, Georgia, to Asheville, North Carolina; and from Atlanta, Georgia, to every church and company — there is reasonable access to the new beginning campground in the Palmetto State.

This campground facility, now known as the Riv-

er Oaks Campground and Convention Center, was purchased May 30, 1983. It is situated on 106 acres and is accessible off of SC State Highway 4 in Orangeburg. The official address is 524 Neeses Highway, Orangeburg, South Carolina.

1984

The first Camp Meeting on the River Oaks Campground was June 7-16, 1984.

1988

On Sunday, April 17, 1988, R. P. Peay became the sixth conference president. The Hispanic and Haitian membership grew greatly; evangelism and church growth were top priority. Between 1988-1997, a total of 9,809 souls became members of the South Atlantic Conference.

The primacy of evangelism, with emphasis on layman involvement between 1988 and 1991, resulted in 13 new churches constructed or bought.

1989

Dr. Deborah Harris, women's ministries director, hosted the largest women's retreat in the history of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

1995

Carolyn Hinson, women's ministries director, had a very successful Bi-Annual Women's Convention at New Heritage USA in Fort Mill, South Carolina.

The tithe figures for 1991, 1992, and 1993 were \$5,857,700.00, \$7,626,221.00, and \$7,594,482.00, respectively.

The baptisms and professions of faith in 1991, 1992, and 1993 were 1,115, 1,279, and 802, respectively.



SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

1997

On Sunday, May 19, 1997, V. J. Mendinghall was elected the seventh president of the South Atlantic Conference.

Under Elder Mendinghall's administration, the conference membership grew from 27,205 to 42,139. The number of churches also increased from 71 to 136.

1999

On May 9, 1999, groundbreaking took place on the construction of a \$4 million worship center with a seating capacity of 4,100, as well as a chapel that seats 200 in the rear of the worship center. The conference also purchased over 11 acres for additional ministries.

The construction also included a very fine air-conditioned youth worship center with a state-of-the-art gymnasium, several large classrooms for meetings, and one office for camp security.

Additionally, South Atlantic constructed the Villas – four beautiful motel units comprising a total of 80 rooms which sleep nearly 400 people.

2004-2009

2004

2004 - In April 2004, the new Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy had an open house. The academy, grades 9-12; the Berean Christian Junior Academy, grades K-8; the Berean Child Development Center, 18 months to 4 years; and the cafeteria, library, gymnasium, and offices were all open for viewing.

2011-2013

2011

2011 - On September 11, 2011, at the 24th Constituency Session, W. L. Winston became the eighth

president of the South Atlantic Conference.

2014

A new office building was purchased, as the space in the old office building was inadequate to meet the growing needs of the conference and its ministries. The new office is located at 3978 Memorial Dr., Decatur, Georgia. Thirteen new pastors were hired to staff the growing work.

2016 - PRESENT

The growth of this conference is blessed by Jesus Christ. Twenty-three pastors have been added to the workers' team, and there is a steady increase in the number of people coming into the churches, as well as an increase in tithes and offerings.

The vision of the South Atlantic Conference was and always will be to "provide Christ-centered leadership to a Spirit-filled membership for God-ordained discipleship."¹

THIS IS THE LORD'S DOING AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES. TO GOD BE PRAISE!

PREPARED BY THE LATE DAVID M. JONES, ARCHIVIST AND HISTORIAN OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE



SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

PRESIDENTS OF SOUTH ATLANTIC CONFERENCE

CAROLINA CONFERENCE

Singleton, 1945-1954

J. H. Wagner, 1954-1962

W. S. Banfield, 1962-1971

R. L. Woodfork, 1971-1981

R. B. Hairston, 1981-1988

R. P. Peay, 1988-1997

V. J. Mendinghall, 1997-2011

W. L. Winston, 2011-

STATISTICS

Churches: 144

Members: 49,008

Population: 23,342,676

Pop./Member Ratio: 476

Street Address: 3978 Memorial Dr., Decatur, GA
30032